



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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CONTACT: Joseph Donovan, Communications Officer, (608) 266-3559

13 students named Presidential Scholar semifinalists

MADISON—Thirteen Wisconsin students are among nearly 550 semifinalists for the Presidential Scholars program, the highest recognition given to graduating seniors. Wisconsin semifinalists, who will be recognized at a June 1 reception at the governor's residence, are

- Richard A. Eyers, Homestead High School, Mequon;
- Brian J. Holoyda, Memorial High School, Madison;
- Andrew L. Ji, Memorial High School, Madison;
- Kendra D. Johnson, West High School, Madison;
- Jenan J. Kharbush, Memorial High School, Madison;
- Dylan B. Mathieu, West High School, Madison;
- Mahalia K. Miller, Stevens Point Area Senior High School;
- Jens J. Notstad, Cambridge Senior High School;
- Marcos U. Ortega, East High School, Wauwatosa;
- Rene M. Sczygelski, West High School, Wausau;
- Suchita R. Shah, Holmen High School;
- Tara R. Skebba of Cedarburg, University School of Milwaukee; and
- Judith D. Wacker, West High School, Madison.

"Students who are named semifinalists for the Presidential Scholars program have accomplished the highest levels of academic achievement," said State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster. "These students, along with their parents and teachers, demonstrate the dedication to academic and extracurricular work that leads to success."

(more)

Most students are chosen for the Presidential Scholars based on exceptional performance on the ACT or SAT college admissions tests. Ortega is among students nominated through their participation in the Arts Recognition and Talent Search program, sponsored by the National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts.

Top-scoring students are invited to complete application materials that include essays, self-assessments, secondary school reports, and transcripts. An independent, national committee of educators convened by the Commission on Presidential Scholars reviews application materials to select semifinalists. The number of semifinalists selected for each state is based on a proportionate number of test-takers for that state.

In April, the Commission on Presidential Scholars will make the final selection of the nation's 121 Presidential Scholars—one male and one female from each state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and from families of U.S. citizens living abroad. In addition, up to 15 students are chosen at large. The Presidential Scholars Commission also chooses the 20 Presidential Scholars in the Arts for a total of 141 Presidential Scholars.

Students receive an expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., in June where they will meet with government officials, educators, authors, musicians, and scientists, and they will receive a Presidential Scholars medallion at a ceremony sponsored by the White House. Scholars are asked to identify one teacher who was most influential in their education. The teacher also is invited to National Recognition Week and receives the Presidential Scholars program Teacher Recognition Award.

The Presidential Scholars program was established by executive order in 1964 to recognize students who have demonstrated academic excellence and leadership.

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